

MEMMO

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76 Senators Urge President to Follow Key Peace Principles

Seventy-six senators sent a letter to President Obama yesterday that strongly backs America's efforts to help Israel achieve peace with all her neighbors while upholding the principles that have successfully led to peace treaties between Israel and both Egypt and Jordan. These key principles include supporting direct, bilateral negotiations between the parties, remaining both a trusted mediator between the parties and a devoted friend to Israel, and insisting on an absolute Palestinian commitment to end incitement and violence against Israel.

The bipartisan letter, which was spearheaded by Sens. Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Arlen Specter (D-PA) and John Thune (R-SD), also calls on the Arab states to take positive steps to support Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Read the full letter [here](#) and view a list of the signatories [here](#).

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and House Republican Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA) are currently circulating a similar letter, which has so far secured support from more than half the members of the House.

Key Points of the Senate Letter Sent to Obama:

- The senators support the president's belief that "every effort should be made to realize" peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors.
- The senators say the "achievement of a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians requires adherence to some key principles," which the United States has followed in its successful efforts to help Israel sign peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. The principles include:
 - The United States must take into account the risks Israel will face and understand that the regional parties themselves must be engaged in direct, bilateral negotiations since they will "live with whatever agreement is reached."
 - The United States and Israel should always work closely together, especially on areas of disagreement.
 - The United States should remain both a trusted friend and active mediator.
 - The United States must insist on an absolute Palestinian commitment to end violence and terror, and to help build the institutions necessary for a viable Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace with the Jewish state of Israel.
 - The United States should press Arab states to begin normalizing ties with Israel and back moderate Palestinians committed to peace. Such Arab efforts would help support productive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.